



Policy
Document

Woodfield School

Literacy Policy

Date: April 2020

Review Date: April 2022

Woodfield School Literacy Policy



Values and Aims:

All pupils should be enabled to develop to their full potential the ability to use and understand English. This may include using any method which will enable the pupil to communicate effectively, and at an appropriate level. Communication is the key to gaining independence, life skills and accessing other parts of the curriculum. **This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Communication (AAC) policy.**

Pupils at Woodfield have a very wide range of abilities and needs, and will use a range of appropriate methods of communication to access the School Curriculum. Literacy comes under the heading of Me and My Communication in the School Curriculum.

As the methods used will not be mutually exclusive, we use the term 'total communication system' to encompass all forms of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) which supplement spoken and written words. These will include, for example; touch cues, objects, symbols, signing or gesture, as well as switches, eye gaze and electronic forms of AAC.

The teaching of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing, will be matched to the pupil's abilities, and staff will use a range of methods and aids which challenge and extend their skills and give positive reinforcement of their efforts by praise/reward of participation in activities. Pupils will learn better if they enjoy the activity and being praised for their participation will make it more likely that they will further engage in similar activities.

We aim to help pupils develop the ability to respond, to listen and to understand in order to communicate effectively as this is a lifelong skill.

It is evident that Communication and Literacy is inherently a cross-curricular skill and therefore must be seen to be developed across the whole curriculum, as well as discretely, and that it provides pupils with opportunities for gaining an understanding of the world and their place in it.

Bi Lingual pupils:

Pupils with English as a Second Language are supported by school staff. As a total communication system is used at school this helps to support all pupils and gives additional help to pupils who do not understand English as their first language. We also have teachers, and support staff, who have EAL who are able to support pupils.

Pupils may be supported if appropriate by an interpreter for assessments and to support in the EHCP meeting.

Teaching and Learning objectives:

The teaching and learning objectives set by teachers are based on those in the School Curriculum and are differentiated as appropriate. They will use and build on skills learned in Class 1 who follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, and take account of the three areas of the National Curriculum coming under the headings of:

- EN 1: Speaking and Listening
- EN2 : Reading and
- EN3 : Writing

Research tells us (Angela Austin 2012) that children with language disorders of any kind are more likely to learn from structuring natural situations, i.e. lunch, café time as it has meaning for them. At Woodfield we following a destination led approach to learning and we therefore try to build structured language acquisition into everyday situations. Pupils will need daily repetition in order to establish good progress and learning.

EN1 acknowledges that “pupils unable to communicate by speech may use other means” (QCA), and the Curriculum at Woodfield therefore incorporates all effective means of communication such as touch cues, objects, gesture, signs, speech, symbols and body language in an environment of total communication. Speaking and listening encompasses all forms of communicative responses and intent.

EN2 and EN3 are concerned with knowledge and understanding in Reading and Writing. Just as speaking and listening is not solely about speech, reading and writing are not solely about text and phonics. Pupils at Woodfield are encouraged to develop and extend their awareness that information can be carried through a wide variety of published resources, for example photographs, pictures, symbols and words. Additionally, multi-sensory resources are used, such as tactile and ICT/sound books, in order to give pupils appropriate and realistic access to reading. Pupils are enabled to develop an awareness of print and script in appropriate contexts, for example stories, written messages, print in the environment.

Teaching objectives for each pupil are both structured and flexible, and incorporates their targets set in EHCP meetings. The school curriculum, enables pupils to use varied cues in the form of objects of reference, photographs or symbols to develop their expressive and receptive communication. However, pupils should be given opportunities to use language creatively and with imagination (where possible), and not in a purely functional way.

Planning:

Me and My Communication can be taught both discreetly and cross-curricular - it is incorporated in every area of the school curriculum. Appropriate planning and provision will be made for pupils who need adaptation to the curriculum in order to access it. As all our pupils are working at different individual levels of progress, planning will need to reflect this by appropriate differentiation within the class/lesson. Pupils are taught in small or class groups, as well as individually.

Each pupil has targets which are set annually at the EHCP Review Meeting, and each teacher provides an annual report based on these targets. The teacher will differentiate the content of the lesson with reference to these targets. In addition, children may receive Speech and Language Therapy input as appropriate, and recommendations are incorporated into their individual programmes.

Medium term planning for Me and My Communication at Woodfield is based on a curriculum written by all teaching staff and updated to take account of the Literacy Strategy (2006) and further directives. It is reviewed yearly.

Pupils are given the opportunity to take part in Big Book sessions and Attention Autism sessions to develop their listening skills and to work both individually and in group situations. The group and individual work concentrates on each pupil's individual targets whilst also

linking them to the vocabulary and content of the shared text. Regular Intensive Interaction sessions, modelling of key vocabulary through signs, symbols and objects and conversational modelling through 'now and next' boards, PDD and visual timetables are used to allow pupils to have access to a wider range of core vocabulary.

Staff will be expected to use on the go assessment to move pupils on and develop further learning opportunities throughout their lesson.

EN1: Speaking & Listening

Pupils have opportunities to use resources to support Speaking and Listening, for example microphones to tape their voice, interactive software, role-play/ drama and online books.

Our goal for many of our pupils will be to develop vocalisations and to widen their range of vocabulary but teaching this across key stages will include participation in social routines, using or interpreting facial expressions and developing oral motor skills such as sucking/blowing/ humming etc.

Listening skills will include responding to their name, engaging in imitation and turn taking (Intensive interaction techniques) and group as well as individual interactions. Drama and singing can play a motivating part in such activities for many pupils.

Letters and Sounds (A phonics resource published by the DfE in 2007) offers a large range of appropriate activities, such as 'listening walks' , sound lotto games and instrument matching activities to encourage appropriate skills at a level relevant to pupils with SLD. (See Appendix 1)

EN2: Reading

For pupils with SLD, reading can be interpreted as any activity that derives meaning from visual or tactile means. Pupils will begin by developing the ability to locate and track sounds, and begin to recognise that these may relate to people or objects. In order to discriminate between sounds, words and pictures we will work with items that our pupils find most motivating. We know that children with ASD only learn what has relevance or meaning to them.

The Rose report says that 'high quality phonics work' should be taught systematically but we know that this does not work for many of our pupils who are not yet at the appropriate level of learning. It should also be noted that research suggests that pupils with severe autism do not learn by phonics as the English language has too many deviations from standard phonemes. If pupils have the pre-requisite skills then phonics will be taught. If they are working at a much younger level then pre-reading skills will be put in place first.

Synthetic phonics will be used, if appropriate for pupils, particularly in the primary school. There are 40+ sounds in English but only 26 letters of the alphabet and this proves difficult to understand for pupils with learning difficulties. For this reason we have chosen to work with Jolly Phonics, as the way phonemes are taught is more logical for our pupils, and we have many resources from the Jolly Phonics range. The school follows the 'Letters and Sounds' programme, as produced by the DfE (2007). Teachers can select their activities as appropriate to the levels and needs of individual pupils. In addition to phonics, children are also encouraged to gain an understanding of rhythm, rhyme, and syllables. Children are encouraged to recognise words by sight, through the use of flashcards, reading books, matching games and labels around the school. Woodfield has its own list of first 50 words (mainly nouns) as our pupils may not understand the traditional list, as it is not motivating.

Literacy is fundamentally about finding meaning in spoken and visual symbolic language. We must remember that people with ASD/ language disorders experience difficulty in gaining meaning across a range of language. When considering pre-reading we have to ensure that the pupils have an understanding and are not just learning by rote. We try to teach this by putting pre-reading tasks into everyday, relevant situations.

Attractive and lively Reading Schemes are available in a variety of formats and pupils have access to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Software supports reading skills, ie, Oxford Reading Tree books. Pupils are encouraged to attend to a familiar voice reading aloud and this should be an age appropriate text where possible, e.g. a chapter per day in secondary to build up a story. Linking sound effects to stories may help all pupils access the text. (Appendix 2)

All pupils have access to the school library, and are encouraged to borrow books to take home on a weekly basis.

EN3: Writing

Pupils are encouraged to produce writing or symbols with a sense of purpose, to communicate news, greetings, thoughts or information. Each classroom has areas where appropriate writing tools are stored, with a variety of paper. Some pupils will need access to a word-book to check spellings, or to use "Spellcheck" on the computer. Woodfield has produced its own symbol dictionary which can be used by both pupils and staff to select the appropriate symbol needed. We continue to add to this resource.

Computers are used to produce work, and school displays provide pupils with the opportunity to see their work displayed.

It is important to provide pupils with the tools to compose work, make simple books, record events or reflect personal interests. To record for different purposes, they may make shopping lists, invite friends for lunch or fill out forms.

Further, since special emphasis is given to phonics as a means of gaining reading skills, the formation of letters is taught where it is considered appropriate and relevant, and a range of writing materials is available.

Primary pupils will begin this journey to expressive writing by tracing and copying writing patterns. However, where little progress is being made in traditional writing format, teachers will need to decide by secondary school age whether there is a better means of writing i.e. ICT based, using skills previously taught such as Clicker grids. (Appendix 3)

Assessment, Recording and Reporting:

Assessment, reporting and recording are in line with Woodfield School Policy for all curriculum areas. Please refer to this document. All pupils will be assessed according to the National Curriculum using the NC levels, Early Years Outcomes for pupils up to the age of 5, The Engagement Model for pupils assessed at lower than P4, or "P" level descriptors. Routes for Learning and Woodfield ISEC (Independence, Self-Esteem and Confidence) Levels are also used to assess pupils development.

Pupils are given opportunities, where appropriate, to develop their English skills through ICT, and each class has access to at least one computer and the use of an interactive whiteboard. ICT plays a large role in the on going assessment of English using other AAC devices, including iPads.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Communication Team Leads have non-contact time to observe how Me and My Communication is taught throughout the school and to look at planning for each key stage.

This time can also be used to look at recording and reporting in Me and My Communication across the school, and findings are fed back to staff in staff meetings as well as to the Head and Governors. The Communication Team Leads are expected to ensure that feedback is followed up in the form of positive changes in teaching and learning strategies. This is part of the School Development Plan.

The policy will be updated every two years.

Written May 2020

Appendix 1:

Speaking and Listening. See Letters and Sounds Phase 1

- Intensive interaction techniques
- Listen to (nursery) rhymes, poems, action songs etc
- Music/rhymes on DVD/Computer/Tapes as well as in person
- Listening games such as matching sounds to items (sound lotto)
- Listening walks to match environmental sounds to pictures/symbols
- Match sounds/musical instruments, make own shakers etc
- Use beaters to listen to sounds e.g. outside on pots, everyday utensils
- Turn taking and listening to others news, saying hello and circle time activities
- Exploring the sounds in words
- Mirror play, looking at faces and making sounds
- Repetitive phrases in books e.g. on switch for pupil to join in
- Choosing favourite rhymes/songs from cards/objects
- Creating sound effects to stories
- Use puppets to create sound effects e.g animals to sounds
- Play with volume, using loud/soft instructions for voices/instruments /music etc
- Copy rhythm and pattern in clapping or instruments. Syllables in their name etc
- Record voices and match to photos of familiar people
- Speaking/listening in every-day situations, both in and out of the classroom
 - through dance/role-play
 - individual work/work with a partner
 - imaginative play, use favourite toys to help extend /enrich vocab
 - development of (symbol) vocabulary, start with family etc
 - communicate to convey a message and giving the response
 - talk to a range of audiences
 - relate experiences e.g. weekend news
 - recognising alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
 - create sounds boxes/displays etc beginning with same letter etc
 - identify sounds that they like/dislike with symbols/voting cards

Appendix 2:

Pre-Reading – early PECS style activities, see also Communication Policy

- enjoyment of pictures and books, free exposure to book corner
- Gives adult correct item on request from one choice
- Gives adult correct item on request from 2 or more
- Points to items spontaneously
- Can point to items on request
- Points to pictures spontaneously
- Can point to pictures on request
- Matches photographs
- Matches pictures/symbols
- Match objects to initial sound (or whole word)
- Group items beginning with same letter

Reading

- Matches word to photo or symbol
- Matches choice of two words to photo/symbol
- Matches range of words to photo/symbol
- Make own books, linking symbol with picture for all sorts of topics, family/home etc
- Slowly replace pictures/symbols on schedule with word only
-
- Hear stories and poems being read aloud (listening skills)
- Share books with an adult- joint attention
- Look at and point to picture. Capitalize on child's interests or strengths so they enjoy learning.
- Look at and talk about picture
- Handle books correctly, right way up etc
- Point out specific item on request e.g. character in book
- Can answer 'what'/'who'/'why' questions
- Can point to and repeat individual words
- Recognise individual letter names and sounds – Jolly Phonics
- Can identify character names in text
- Can identify other whole words in context
- Predict outcomes in the story/ knows when you have changed ending
- Sequence 3+ cards to tell a story
- Can use initial phonic cues to decode simple words in text
- Begins to decode CVC words using phonic knowledge
- Uses syllable division to decode words
- Uses suffix knowledge to decode words
- Can read from reading scheme books with minimal support
- Can identify words out of context
- Can answer questions related to text

- Can read text with expression and minimal adult support
- Can retell the sequence of the story in own words
- Can read out loud to group with minimal support

Appendix 3: Pre-writing ideas at Woodfield

When planning differentiated activities you may like to consider the following practical ideas, which many of us already carry out.

It is good to understand that pupils need to be at approx 6 years of age (developmentally) before they are ready for directed writing. Many of our pupils will never achieve this but can have assisted writing such as an adult scribing their ideas and all of the following constitute pre- writing activities to help individual development. I have tried to link the starting point of activities with P level. However, items on the list below are not exclusive to the P level. If a child prints at P3 it does not mean that they will stop printing when P4 or P5 etc but gives an indication of appropriate starting points.

NB The development of **gross motor skills precedes fine motor skills** and staff should plan for hand/eye coordination activities to help with pre- writing.

P1 – P2

- Large body movements of arms, guided by adult up and down, around in circles etc
- Dough pressed into pupils hands
- Body awareness, draw patterns up and down their back, do they show awareness?
- Make marks in foam etc with large prompted movements
- Tactile materials = oats, rice, pasta, lux flakes, jelly, cereal, dough, glitter, salt
- Describe tactile objects to pupil, use simple appropriate language.
- Eye gaze held by torch e.g. sound/light room

P3

- Post shapes into boxes
- Body awareness, 'heads, shoulders knees & toes' etc
- Make marks in foam etc
- Playing sand/ water using buckets etc
- Draw in cornflour paste, drip it from fingers and use tools
- Use feely bags to experience objects by touch
- Tracking items with eye gaze, such as cars on the road, items across computer screen.
- Add children's names to art work, displays etc, and draw their attention to it.

P4

- Draw in damp, dry or coloured sand –use fingers and tools
- Ride bikes/ scooters etc
- Make patterns in clay/dough. Use variety of tools
- Encourage 'small world' play using miniature people, vehicles, homes etc
- Paint on large scale outside

- Provide diverse materials to stick in collage.
- Begin to use thick and fine brushes in paint.
- Print with different shapes e.g. fruit/veg, matchbox, cotton reel, brick
- Hunt for letters(wooden or plastic) buried in sand.

P5

- Push & pull trolleys etc
- Building with construction
- Painting walls and fences with water and large brushes
- Pick up beads / pegs with pincer grip
- Construct with duplo and large bricks
- Imaginative play with dinosaurs, animals, and habitats.
- Use a variety of paper/ different sizes, colours, textures in play
- Sort and handle coins and buttons. Compare and match
- Mould, squeeze, flatten, cut, roll dough or different textures

P6

- Rolling a ball and aiming at specific targets, beanbags into buckets etc
- Manipulate clothes pegs on a line
- Thread with fine laces
- Provide opportunities for chubby crayons, chalk etc
- Stimulating and changing range of inset puzzles.
- Copy a simple bead pattern.
- Finger trace letter shapes in velvet, sandpaper, felt etc

P7

- Weave ribbons through netting
- Use a range of thick and fine pencils
- Stack cotton reels, roll them etc
- Construct with lego and small bricks.
- Manipulate sellotape, paste , glue sticks etc
- Use one handed tools and equipment such as scissors, knife, stapler
- Use dot to dot patterns (with or without numbers)
- Magnetic letters to begin to group letters
- Matching games

P8

- Experience using light pressure e.g. paint on suspended paper, use feather and ink
- Provide opportunities for using charcoal, pastels etc
- Dress dolls with buttons/ zips/ fastenings for fine motor
- Composition of own written work scribed by an adult.
- Letter shapes link to sounds i.e. c is for cat
- Make own scrapbook, dictionaries.
- Card games. Turn taking etc

NC1

- Pattern making
- Drawing from still life

- Drawing and writing task relates to text, community visit, themselves and natural objects – something concrete and meaningful.